


CODE ADMINISTRATOR CITY OF MANISTEE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission Members

FROM: Jon R. Rose 

DATE: March 15, 1996

RE: March 21, 1996 Worksession

We have the Master Plan on the March 21, 1996 Worksession Agenda. Enclosed is a copy of the Master Plan section out of the MSPO Basic Planning Commission Manual, this will refresh everybody on what we will need to be looking at on Thursday.

If you have any questions feel free to call.

JRR:djm

Enclosures

FROM THE DESK OF...

Jon R. Rose
Code Administrator
City of Manistee
P.O. Box 358
Manistee, MI 49660

(616) 723-2558
FAX: (616) 723-1546

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND THE MASTER PLAN

WHAT IS THE MASTER PLAN?

The Master Plan is an official statement of goals and policies that expresses a vision for the orderly and desirable future development of the community. It includes maps, plans, charts and verbal description which depicts the community's recommendations for the orderly development of the community. The future land use portion of the plan classifies and allocates land for the future development of such uses as agriculture, residences, commerce, industry, recreation and public facilities. The plan serves as a long range vision to guide present day decision-making by the Planning Commission, other officials and individuals concerned with the future physical form of the community. A Master Plan provides the legal basis for the establishment of, and amendments to, the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, and capital improvement programs.

Master Plans may also be known as Comprehensive Plan, General Development Plan, Basic Plan, Guide Plan, Municipal Plan, Future Land Use Plan, or any number of other names.

Purpose of the Master Plan

Statutory



Formulate public policy to promote public health, safety, and general welfare through:



Encouraging the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability

MSPD Basic Program _____

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

The purpose of the Master Plan is to formulate public policy to promote public health, safety and general welfare. This is done through developing a Master Plan that encourages the use of resources in accordance with their character and adaptability.

The Master Plan should identify desired densities in order to avoid the overcrowding of land by buildings and people. Land uses should be located in such a way as to minimize congestion on public roads and streets.

The Master Plan should facilitate the provision of public improvements such as transportation, sewage disposal, safe and adequate water supply, and other public services consistent with the current and future population demand.

Purpose of the Master Plan



Avoiding the overcrowding of land by buildings and people



Lessening congestion on public roads and streets



Facilitating the provision of public improvements based upon future population demands



Identifying suitability for particular uses of the land

MSPD Basic Program _____

The Master Plan should also identify the suitability for particular uses of the land based upon existing community and natural characteristics, trends in land use development and population growth.

What is Included in the Master Plan

- ☐ Future Land Use Plan ☐ Existing environment
- ☐ Population and housing ☐ Parks and recreation
- ☐ Economic base ☐ Community facilities
- ☐ Design guidelines ☐ Utility plans
- ☐ Transportation ☐ Capital Improvement Plan

MEPO Basic Program

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE MASTER PLAN?

The **Future Land Use Plan** is the key component of the Master Plan. It describes the existing land use, development patterns and constraints and opportunities for development. This section of the Master Plan often serves as a culmination of the various other sections of the Master Plan (natural resources, transportation, utilities, etc.) as they relate to the future land use.

This section identifies areas suitable for more intense uses (industrial, commercial and higher density housing) and areas that should be maintained at lower densities. All of these items provide a basis for the future land use plan which serves as a guide for future development of the community.

Population and housing analysis is based upon the existing and projected demographics of the community. Information included in this section will be population, age distribution and household characteristics. Much of the data used in this section are derived from the US Census. This section will include future population projections and descriptions of demographic and social characteristics.

Economic base describes the income and employment of the community. This section may also include commercial and industrial base analysis. The purpose of this section is to determine how well existing commercial and industrial facilities serve needs, and to determine the extent of new commercial and industrial development that will be required to serve the future population.

Some plans include **design guidelines** for landscaping, access management, site design, and other specific planning elements. Normally, the guidelines are part of a comprehensive program of community design and are implemented by various ordinances and review processes.

The **transportation** component provides a comprehensive review of existing transportation conditions, projects future volumes based on development patterns and suggests roadway improvements. Major elements will include mapping and evaluation of existing traffic conditions, current and proposed roadway functional classification, and a description of future traffic conditions based on modeling future land use patterns. This section of the Master Plan should also address non-motorized improvements (bike paths, etc.).

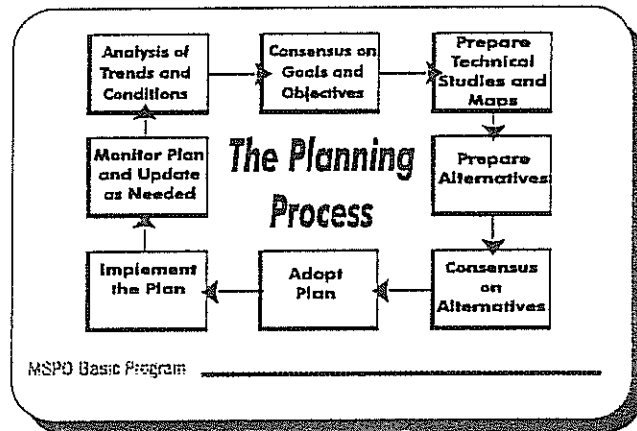
The **existing environment** section includes mapping and evaluation of environmental features in the community. Information described in this section of the Master Plan includes soils, woodlands, wetlands, determination of key vistas, significant topography, active prime farmland and water quality issues. Polluted, unique and fragile environmental areas are defined and evaluated.

Other components of the Master Plan will address specific infrastructure and community services. These include **parks and recreation plans**, **community facilities plans**, including schools, libraries, police and fire protection as well as **utility plans**. These items are all necessary to support the projected future population and development.

The **Capital Improvements Program** is a six year plan for capital expenditures necessary to implement the Master Plan. The CIP lists projects that relate directly to the Master Plan. The elements included in the CIP are the project names, descriptions, costs, priorities, years to be implemented and potential funding sources. The CIP needs to be updated on an annual basis.

MASTER PLAN PROCESS

Master planning is a continuous process which involves a number of steps:



1. An analysis of existing trends and conditions.
2. Discussion of problems, trends, and potentials, resulting in the establishment of a consensus on community Goals and Objectives;
3. The preparation of technical studies and maps;

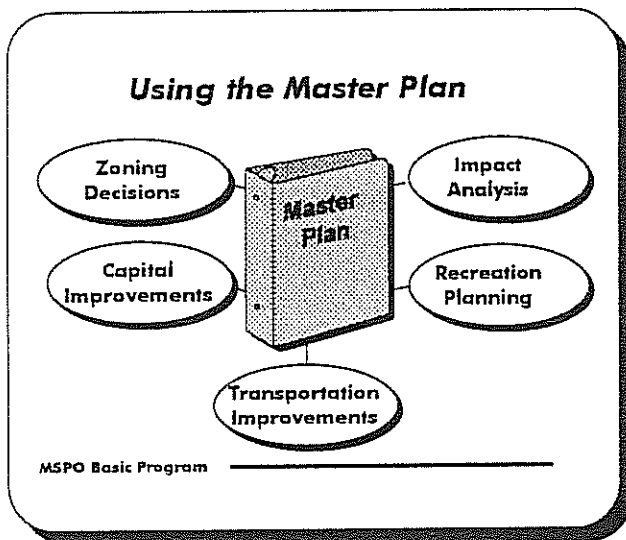
4. The development of alternative plans for community growth;
5. Discussion and development of a consensus on the desired alternative;
6. Adoption of a Plan, according to the Planning statutes;
7. Implementation of various Plan proposals, new zone districts, etc.; and
8. Periodic review and updating of the Plan as community conditions change; leading back to the first step of the planning process.

USING THE MASTER PLAN

Master Plans serve as instruments which guide the evolution of the community by bringing the social, physical, economic and political considerations into more meaningful focus. Master Plans have many other practical advantages as decision-making guides, including:

1. *Public Understanding and Participation:* The straight-forward character of the Master Plan aids public understanding of the planning process and how goals for the community are to be achieved.
2. *Consistency:* Clearly stated policies covering all concerns of the Master Plan can do much to minimize the possibility of arbitrary decision making.
3. *Efficiency:* When a growing community is confronted with problems of a recurring nature, use of the Master Plan may reduce the amount of time spent on an individual project without lowering the quality of planning recommendations.
4. *Coordination:* The Master Plan creates a single framework within which all elements of government may act in concert on development proposals.
5. *Continuity:* A Master Plan is general by nature and thus provides an element of continuity as specific proposals of the Plan are implemented or modified over time.
6. *Guide to Decision-Making and Review:* The Plan is helpful as a guide in adopting land use controls, and to the courts in judging the fairness of specific controls in the context of community goals.

As the Master Plan provides the basis for the zoning ordinance, zoning decisions should be consistent with the Plan. The Master Plan is one item the Planning Commission takes into account with rezonings, special land uses and site plan review. If the Master Plan is rigorously followed, it will often support controversial decisions made in favor of the Plan.



The Master Plan serves as a powerful tool in guiding utility extensions and capital improvements. The future land use plan describes the projected development of the community and identifies where capital improvements will be necessary to support growing populations and expanding business.

The data and the analysis of the interrelations of land uses included in the Master Plan provide a sound basis for evaluating the impacts of proposed development. The Master Plan also serves as a policy statement on the desired community environment and what types of development are considered compatible with the desired future community character.

The Master Plan will identify the need for recreational facilities, based upon the areas designated for future residential development and the amount of population needing to be served. The Master Plan can also be used for setting priorities for recreation facility planning.

Decisions on necessary transportation improvements should be based in part on the future land use plan. Land use and transportation demands are closely interrelated. Improvements to transportation facilities, such as roads, can be made in coordination with the gradual implementation or development of the future land use plan.

MASTER PLAN WORKSHEET

1. **The zoning ordinance should be based on a Master Plan.**

True. The zoning enabling acts state that "the land development regulations and districts authorized by this act shall be made in accordance with a plan designed to promote and accomplish the objectives of this act." (City or Village Zoning Act). The Township Rural Zoning Act states that "the zoning ordinance shall be based on a plan designed to promote the public health, safety and general welfare. . ." The Township Planning Act requires that a Plan be prepared by the Planning Commission to serve as the basis of the Township Zoning Ordinance.

2. **The only portion of the Master Plan that is official is the future land use map.**

False. The entire adopted document is included as part of the Master Plan. For example, when using the Master Plan to guide rezoning decisions, sections such as the Goals and Objectives should be reviewed in addition to the future land use map.

3. **The future land use plan should give each owner what they believe is the "highest and best use" for their land.**

False. Generally, the Master Plan should balance the landowners right of a reasonable use of their land with the rights of the community. Zoning based upon the Master Plan does not guarantee an owner "highest and best use" or the most profitable use. However, zoning can not be so restrictive that there is no reasonable use for the land (this can involve a "taking" of the land for public use).

4. **The Master Plan is a legally enforceable document.**

False. The Master Plan is a guide for future development decisions. The zoning ordinance and other development regulations that may be based on the Master Plan are legally enforceable documents.

5. **Referencing the Master Plan for zoning decisions can help support and defend those decisions.**

True. The Master Plan can be used to help guide zoning decisions. Reference to the Master Plan should be a consistent practice. Using the Master Plan to support decisions can help defend the decision in court. Use of the Master Plan may be weakened if your community has made other decisions in conflict with the plan or if the plan is found to be outdated.

6. **The future land use map should match the existing land use map.**

False. The Future Land Use map will provide a future vision on how the community should continue to develop over the next 10-20 years. The existing land use map is intended to illustrate a "snapshot" of the community's land as it is being used at the time when the information was gathered.

7. **Once the Master Plan's initial goals and objectives are established, they should never be changed.**

False. The goals and objectives may change as the community changes. MSPO suggests that community officials periodically review the goals and objectives, and amend the plan where needed.

8. **The Master Plan can include special subarea plans, such as for a corridor.**

True. A number of communities adopt Master Plans for special subarea plans, including corridor plans, downtown plans, and others.

9. **The Planning Acts specify that the Master Plan must be adopted by the elected body.**

False. The Planning Acts require that the Master Plan be adopted by the Planning Commission. The elected body can still also adopt the Plan. Some charters require adoption or ratification by the elected body in addition to adoption by the Planning Commission.

10. **The future land use map should identify the suitability of land for particular uses based upon community character, environmental conditions, trends in land use and population growth.**

True. The Future Land Use map must have a logical basis which provides a rational allocation of land into various land use categories. The plan needs to be substantiated by these and other pertinent factors.